

**Subject:** FW: RELEASE: House approves FY 21 budget



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: John Estus  
Office of House Speaker Charles McCall  
Capitol: (405) 557-7439  
Cell: (405) 706-0084

## **House approves FY 21 budget**

**OKLAHOMA CITY** – The House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed a Fiscal Year 2021 general appropriations bill Thursday designed to spare common education from cuts amid COVID-19 while maintaining adequate funding to avoid service reductions elsewhere in government.

The House vote on Senate Bill 1922, the general appropriations bill, was 77-23. The Senate previously passed the bill, 36-11. It now goes to Gov. Kevin Stitt.

“A unified Legislature overwhelmingly delivered a best-case scenario budget for the people in a trying time,” said House Speaker Charles McCall, R-Atoka. “I thank my House colleagues for their steadfast action on this budget. On behalf of the House, I extend strong appreciation to Senate President Pro Tempore Greg Treat and the entire Senate for their partnership at a critical time for Oklahoma, and look forward to Governor Stitt’s partnership in making it law and moving the state forward.”

The budget limits most agency reductions to 4% or less.

With federal COVID-19 relief funds considered, common education – the state’s largest investment – would receive no reduction next year and may receive more money. Recent teacher pay raises will not be impacted.

Under the agreement, the State Department of Education’s temporary appropriation reduction is 2.5%, or \$78.2 million, of its \$3 billion appropriation. With relief funds considered, though, common education is projected to receive more money. Oklahoma’s \$200 million in COVID-19 relief money for common education fully offsets the temporary state funding reduction of \$78.2 million, or 2.5%, to common education.

Higher education and CareerTech would also see temporary state reductions offset by federal relief funds.

“This budget prioritized education and healthcare, and kept the rest of core government functioning, which was a major achievement given the odds. When double-digit reductions were feared, keeping

most budget reductions to 4% or less is a major relief,” said House Appropriations and Budget Chairman Kevin Wallace, R-Wellston. “At a time the state needed us to, legislators came together and fulfilled our constitutional duty. We look forward to this budget becoming law and providing certainty at a time it is needed.”

The House is passing other bills Thursday that effectuate the FY 2021 budget agreement. The total appropriated budget in SB 1922 is \$7.7 billion, which is \$237.8 million, or 3%, less than the FY 2020 budget, which was the largest in state history. The FY 21 budget will be among the largest budgets in state history.

Under the agreement, most of the \$1.4 billion, or 17%, revenue hole projected last month is filled by using reserve funds, cutting one-time spending, temporarily redirecting non-appropriated money into the budget, and agency appropriation reductions of 4% or less in most cases.

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